

Integration of the Bharatiya Knowledge System (BKS) for Holistic Development as Envisaged in National Education Policy 2020: A Theoretical Analysis

Alok Gardia


Banaras Hindu University, India
alok.edu@bhu.ac.in

Jagriti Singha

Banaras Hindu University, India
jagritisingha@gmail.com

Deepa Mehta

Banaras Hindu University, India
deepamehta.edu@bhu.ac.in

 © 2024 Alok Gardia, Jagriti Singha, and Deepa Mehta

Abstract. Ancient Bharat, i.e. Ancient India, was an epicentre of knowledge, characterised by a profound tradition that integrated spirituality, philosophy, and science. The Bharatiya Knowledge System, commonly known as the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) comprises a compendium of knowledge, customs, practices, and beliefs transmitted down through generations in India. The Upanishads and the Vedic texts – Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda – offered a comprehensive framework for understanding life and the universe in general. The Bharatiya Knowledge System's (BKS), holistic approach to education emphasizes moral, spiritual, and intellectual development. The Gurukul System was a very popular educational system in ancient Bharat. The subjects taught covered a wide range, including Sanskrit, religious literature, logic, and metaphysics. The guru played a very significant role and not only gave instructions but set examples for others to follow. The holistic development of the individual, which went beyond academic knowledge and included emotional, bodily, and spiritual well-being, was one of the main goals of the Bharatiya Knowledge System. A crucial factor that contributed to this all-encompassing development was the practice of yoga, which was documented in ancient literature. Yoga was not just a kind of physical exercise but also

a means of achieving self-discipline, mental clarity, and spiritual enlightenment. The National Education Policy 2020 seeks to bring this age-old knowledge back into the current educational system. It envisions a curriculum that fosters mental resilience, a closer relationship with one's inner self, and overall well-being. The NEP 2020 acknowledges the value of traditional Bharatiya wisdom, particularly in promoting students' emotional stability, mental well-being, and personal development. The paper follows a theoretical analysis approach, focusing on the conceptual foundations and philosophical underpinnings of the ancient Bharatiya Knowledge System. The analysis comprises a thorough examination of primary sources, including the Vedas, Upanishads, and other classical writings and secondary literature, commentaries and contemporary interpretations. The integration of these ancient concepts within contemporary education through NEP 2020, the role of yoga in personality development, and the holistic nature of the ancient education system are among the key themes that are explored. The theoretical framework explores the tenets of Bharatiya Knowledge Practice, emphasizing the connections between traditional knowledge and contemporary educational needs. As a result, the study shows how the ancient Bharatiya Knowledge System provides an integrative, holistic model of education and development that is still very relevant to contemporary teaching methods, especially when it comes to improving students' mental and emotional health.

Key Words: Ancient Bharat, Bharatiya Knowledge System (BKS), holistic development, National Education Policy 2020

Integracija starodavne indijske vednosti v vzgoji in izobraževanju, kot ju predvideva nacionalna vzgojno-izobraževalna politika 2020: teoretska analiza

Povzetek. Starodavni Bharat oz. Indija je bila središče znanja, za katerega je bila značilna bogata tradicija, ki je povezovala duhovnost, filozofijo in znanost. Upaništade in vedska besedila – Rigveda, Jadžurveda, Samaveda in Atharvaveda – so ponujali celovit okvir za razumevanje življenja in vesolja na splošno. Celostni pristop BKS (Bharatiya Knowledge System) k izobraževanju poudarja moralni, duhovni in intelektualni razvoj. Izobraževalni proces v gurukulih, tradicionalnih vzgojnih sistemih, je poudarjal izkustveno učenje, samorefleksijo in raziskovanje, saj je bilo učenje razumljeno kot vseživljenjsko prizadevanje. Guru je imel zelo pomembno vlogo in ni le dajal navodil, temveč je predstavljal zgled, ki so ga drugi posnemali. Vsestranski razvoj posameznika – ki je presegal akademsko znanje in je vključeval čustveno, telesno ter duhovno blaginjo –, je bil eden glavnih ciljev indijskega sis-

tema znanja. Ključni dejavnik, ki je prispeval k temu vsestranskemu razvoju, je bila praksa joge, ki je bila dokumentirana v starodavni literaturi. Joga ni bila le vrsta telesne vadbe, temveč tudi sredstvo za doseganje samodiscipline, duševne jasnosti in duhovnega razsvetljenja. Nacionalna izobraževalna politika (National Education Policy (NEP) 2020) poskuša to starodavno znanje vključiti v sedanji izobraževalni sistem. Predvideva učni načrt, ki spodbuja duševno odpornost, tesnejši odnos z notranjim jazom in splošno dobro počutje. NEP 2020 priznava vrednost tradicionalne indijske modrosti, zlasti pri spodbujanju čustvene stabilnosti, duševnega blagostanja in osebnega razvoja učencev. Članek sledi pristopu teoretične analize in se osredotoča na konceptualne temelje ter filozofske podlage starodavnega indijskega sistema znanja. Z metodo teoretične analize se raziskava osredotoča na filozofske in konceptualne temelje starodavnega indijskega sistema znanja. Analiza obsega temeljito analizo primarnih virov, vključno z vedami, upanišadami in drugimi klasičnimi spisi, ter sekundarne literature, komentarjev in sodobnih interpretacij. Vključevanje teh starodavnih konceptov v sodobno izobraževanje preko NEP 2020 skupaj z vlogo joge pri razvoju osebnosti in celostne narave starodavnega izobraževalnega sistema predstavlja ključne obravnavane teme. Teoretični okvir raziskuje načela indijske prakse znanja in poudarja povezave med tradicionalnim znanjem ter sodobnimi izobraževalnimi potrebami. Študija posledično pokaže, kako starodavni indijski sistem znanja zagotavlja integrativni in celostni model izobraževanja ter razvoja, ki je še vedno zelo pomemben za sodobne metode poučevanja, zlasti ko gre za izboljšanje duševnega in čustvenega zdravja učencev.

Ključne besede: starodavna Indija, indijski sistem vednosti, celovita vzgoja, indijska izobraževalna politika

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 prioritises the integration of Bharatiya Knowledge System into the modern educational curriculum, intending to amalgamate traditional knowledge from diverse domains such as science, philosophy, medicine (Ayurveda), arts, and culture with modern education, thus promoting a more comprehensive learning experience grounded in India's deep heritage; essentially striving to reconcile ancient Indian wisdom with contemporary knowledge frameworks. The deep heritage of ancient Bharatiya philosophy and wisdom serves as an inspiration for the National Education Policy 2020 (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development n.d.). Bharat has traditionally been an epicentre for learning. Bharat's rich culture, wealth,

beliefs, philosophies, art, architecture, and educational methods enticed travellers from all over the world (Timane and Wandhe 2024; Basham 1954). The educational system of ancient Bharat was well-known for the traditions, customs, and wisdom that served to educate and enlighten people (Radhakrishnan 1953). This lays the foundations for investigating Bharat's historic educational system and realizing its impact on societal norms and values. Our ancient Bharatiya educational system developed over time, starting from the Rigveda, and was centred on the holistic development of the individual by adhering to both the inner and outer self. Intellectual, physical, spiritual, and moral aspects of life were the main objectives of the ancient Bharatiya education system (Kumari 2017). It placed a strong focus on virtues, including discipline, humility, honesty, self-reliance, and respect for all living things. The appreciation of the harmony between humans and the environment was imparted to the students. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* emphasizes the responsibility of students toward society, particularly through the lens of *Dharma*, which refers to righteous duty (Olivelle 1996). It encourages students to uphold moral values, contribute positively to their families and communities, and share knowledge to foster collective growth. Bharat has a long history of educational practices that are realistic, pragmatic, attainable, and compatible with everyday life. Prominent educational establishments such as Nalanda and Takshashila, which offered a comprehensive, multidisciplinary education and lured academia from all over the world, serve as examples of Bharat's rich intellectual legacy. NEP 2020 continues the tradition by emphasizing how important it is for people to develop across all levels – moral, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual. With an emphasis on the highest human aspirations of knowledge, wisdom, and truth, NEP 2020 aims to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and traditional wisdom into the contemporary educational framework. Recognizing the significance of these components, NEP 2020 seeks to provide a more culturally responsive and comprehensive educational framework that equips students for twenty-first-century problems. Modern educational systems can incorporate the most effective techniques from past centuries. The objective of NEP 2020 is to establish a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and cultural appreciation by incorporating parts of the Bharatiya Knowledge System into the educational system. The knowledge and methods of historical scholars and organizations can be used in modern educational systems to improve students' moral, intellectual, and social development.

Sources of Knowledge in Ancient Bharat

The Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, and Dharmasutras were the principal texts used in the ancient Bharatiya educational system. Learning also came via the writings of authors such as Aryabhata, Panini, Katyayana, and Patanjali, as well as from the medical texts written by Sushruta and Charaka. Furthermore, a distinction was made between Kavyas (creative and imaginative literature) and Shastras (learned disciplines). Various disciplines, including Itihas (history), Anviksiki (logic), Mimamsa (interpretation), Shilpashastra (architecture), Arthashastra (polity), Varta (agricultural, trade, commerce, and animal husbandry), and Dhanurvedya (archery), were used as sources of knowledge. A major part of the curriculum included physical education, where students engaged in a variety of activities such as yogasadhana (mind and body training), dhanurvedya (archery for learning martial arts), vyayamaprakara (exercises), and krida (games and leisure activities) (Singh 2017). The gurus and their students together worked tirelessly to hone all areas of knowledge. Peer learning was another method that was in place in ancient times. Learned debates, or shastrartha, were arranged to evaluate students' learning, where less experienced students were supervised by more experienced students (Selvamani 2019).

Both formal and informal educational systems existed in ancient Bharat. Indigenous education was imparted in chatuspadis, gurukuls, pathshalas, tols, temples, and homes. There were adults in houses, villages, and temples who helped young children adapt religious practices. Additionally, temples served as educational hubs and helped in advancing ancient knowledge systems. For further education, students attended universities and viharas. Most of the time, instruction was given orally, and pupils took notes and meditated upon what was taught in the class. Gurukuls, named after sages, and sometimes referred to as ashrams, which served as residential centres for learning, were educational institutions where hundreds of students studied together. Even in the early Vedic era, women had access to education. There are references to several well-known female Vedic intellectuals, including Maitreyi, Viswambhara, Apala, Gargi, and Lopamudra. The Guru-Shishya relationship, lineage, or parampara constituted the foundation of the ancient Bharatiya education system. The Guru, or teacher, served as the preceptor of wisdom, nurturing and caring for his trainees as if they were his sons. The students, referred to as Shishyas resided in the Guru's abode, known as the gurukul, where

they studied the Vedas, and served the Guru as if he were their father (Pal and Chakrabarti 2024). The gurus and their shishyas coexisted, supporting each other in every aspect of life. The primary goals were self-actualization, maintaining discipline, and an extensive education. While pursuing their education in various fields, such as debating arts, history, law, medicine, etc., the focus was placed on developing the inner as well as the external aspects of every person's personality. In their pursuit of knowledge, monks and nuns built several monasteries and viharas where they could meditate, engage in discourse, and meet with scholars. Other higher education institutions grew up around these viharas, drawing students from far-off places like China, Korea, Tibet, Burma, Ceylon, Java, and Nepal (Ghonge, Bag, and Singh 2020).

Bharatiya Knowledge System: A Way of Life

Knowledge was free at the time and was regarded as sacred. Donations for education were regarded as the highest form of giving. Society, parents, and affluent companies provided financial support. In addition to buildings, gifts of land were given to the universities and free education programmes were offered at other ancient universities like Jagaddala, Valabhi, and Vikramshila. Agraharas functioned as educational hubs during the same period throughout southern Bharat. Other cultural institutions known as Ghatika and Brahmapuri were also present in the kingdoms of South Bharat. A Ghatika was a sort of educational institution that taught both religion and other subjects. An agrahara was a larger establishment, a community of erudite Brahmins with its own governing body and resources supported by contributions from the community. The ancient Bharatiya educational system continued as indigenous schools, ashrams, and temples. In the Medieval Period, Madrasas and Maktabas were incorporated into the educational system. During the Islamic period, Madrasas served as institutions of higher education and Maktabas were built for younger students for primary education (Biswas 2016). Indigenous schooling was quite popular in pre-colonial Bharat. This was an extension of the earlier-implemented formal system. The majority of the education in this system was spiritual and religious. Similar schools existed in various parts of Bharat, such as pathshalas in western Bharat, chatuspadis in Bihar, and tols in Bengal. Donations and local resources funded education. According to references found in books and memoirs, locals also sponsored education in southern Bharat. The ancient Bharatiya educational system placed a strong emphasis on develop-

ing every aspect of themselves inside and out. As a result, in the modern educational setting in Bharat, emphasis is being placed on connecting learning to real-world applications. Educationists nowadays acknowledge the value of multilingual and multicultural instruction in bridging the gap between traditional and ancient knowledge and modern education, which as a result, has contributed to the holistic development of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life.

The first stage of the Ashrama system, which generally corresponds to the first eight years of a person's existence, is defined as learning to live independently. The following stage is typically a period of knowledge acquisition and preparation for leading a fulfilled life (Rajagopalan 2021). During the Brahmacharya Ashrama (the first stage of life in the Vedic ashrama system), students underwent Gurukulavasam, a period of residency in the guru's abode, dedicated to learning and discipline. Some scholars assert that the Gurukulavasam was more holistic and provided students with knowledge of the world (Aparavidya) in addition to knowledge of religion and spirituality (Paravidya) (Sreekala Devi and Pillai 2012). Teachers during this stage initiate all of the learning, and the pupils are seen as passive recipients of this information. It is common practice to make a negative comparison between this and contemporary educational ideas such as 'activity-based learning' and 'student-initiated learning,' which are praised for their emphasis on the student within the classroom. In contrast to this interpretation, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad describes education as a three-step process that includes *shravana*, which refers to hearing from the instructor; *manana*, which refers to assimilation by the student through contemplation and reflection; and *Nididhyasana*, which refers to concentrated contemplation of truth to realize it (Sreekala Devi and Pillai 2012). This concept emphasizes student-centred education, with the guru serving as a resource person and facilitator. In addition, for the students to achieve greater levels of learning, they were required to demonstrate *shraddha*, which is a term that means commitment and steadfastness. This placed the students in control of charting their course of learning (Chidbavananda 1964). According to Sreekala Davi and Pillai (2012), the typical age of entry was the eighth year of an individual's life; however, it might stretch up to the twelfth year of the student's life, depending on the readiness of the student.

Through national assemblies and philosophical discussions, knowledge from a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, medicine, and military sciences, was shared at learning centres like Takshashila and

Nalanda, which served as the nucleus of intellectual exchange (Chatopadhyay 2023). Contemporary scholars agree that this method promoted moral and ethical growth in addition to intellectual understanding. Nowadays, to achieve the goal of well-rounded human development, educationists perceive these ideas as a means of integrating older holistic methods with modern educational systems. The goal of the ancient Bharatiya Education System was to develop the human personality in an orderly, systematic, and comprehensive manner. The concept of Purushartha, originating from Purusha (self) and Artha (goal), indicates four principal objectives of existence: Dharma (duty), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation) (Badjatya 2024). It is based on the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, and Mahabharata and promotes a life that is in harmony with the body, mind, intellect, and soul, giving a reasonable approach to fulfilling human urges while acknowledging their validity (Suman and Ashok 2015).

- *Dharma*: Dharma stands for morality, duty, righteousness, and ethical behaviour. It is the desire to live according to one's moral convictions, obligations, and societal expectations. Dharma places a strong emphasis on keeping moral principles, pursuing the path of righteousness, and contributing what is necessary to benefit society, the entire cosmos, and the self.
- *Artha*: Artha represents the desire for material prosperity, wealth, and well-being. To sustain oneself and one's family entails acquiring resources, maintaining one's financial stability, and ensuring one's economic security. Within the frameworks of ethics and social duty, artha includes the satisfaction of material needs and aspirations.
- *Kama*: The pursuit of desires, sensual pleasure, and aesthetic gratification is referred to as kama. It includes the fulfilment of emotional, physical, and sensory needs, such as those found in relationships, love, art, music, and other forms of enjoyment. Kama acknowledges the value of embracing happiness, beauty, and other sense pleasures in life.
- *Moksha*: The ultimate state of liberation, spiritual enlightenment, and freedom from the cycle of birth and death (samsara) can be represented as moksha. Seeking self-realization, transcendence, and unity with the divine or ultimate reality are all part of it. Moksha is the accomplishment of spiritual freedom and enlightenment, as well as the soul's release from material attachments (Panchal 2023).

The Purusharthas provide a complete framework that helps people balance their pursuit of money, pleasure, righteousness, and spiritual emancipation to negotiate the intricacies of human existence. People can work toward holistic development, moral behaviour, financial success, emotional fulfilment, and spiritual enlightenment by incorporating these four objectives throughout their lives. This will eventually result in a happy and meaningful existence (Suman and Ashok 2015).

Ancient Bharatiya education was designed to cultivate dedicated, responsible, and devout individuals who actively engaged in societal contributions (Rangachar 1964, 36). An additional component of the ancient Bharatiya educational system was teaching students about civic and social responsibilities. The pupils were not expected to live as hedonistic individuals. They were frequently reminded of their social responsibilities. The concept of perfection played a central role in the development of the human intellect and spirit in the ancient Bharatiya educational system. Individuals in ancient Bharatiya education were focused on strengthening several major universal attributes that, when combined, create a better kind of person. Any free, developed society is built on the foundation of human values, including trust, respect, honesty, dignity, and courtesy (Markandan 2001). These attributes are not necessarily substantially different from what contemporary educational systems attempt to instil in their pupils. The key purposes of ancient Bharatiya education include:

- *Fit for Society*: The aim was to prepare students to live moral and prosperous lives within society. This required reminding pupils of their responsibilities to the community as well as establishing in them a sense of civic and social duties.
- *Civic and Social Duties*: The emphasis of ancient Bharatiya education was on fostering in pupils a sense of social awareness and civic duty. They were encouraged to live non-selfish lives based on making positive contributions to society.
- *Useful Members of Society*: The primary objective was to create people who could actively work to improve society. Students were encouraged and inspired to contribute to their communities by promoting the value of social responsibility and philanthropy (Sssihl, 2020).
- *Character Development*: Ancient Bharatiya education placed a great focus on character development alongside academic knowledge. The development of virtues, moral principles, and ethical values –

all necessary for living a righteous and moral life – was emphasized for the students.

- *Holistic Development:* Bharatiya education in ancient times was structured around basic ethical principles aiming to support people's progress on all levels, including moral, intellectual, spiritual, and physical. The goal of this all-encompassing strategy is to develop complete and balanced citizens who can make meaningful contributions to society and lead prosperous lives (Radhakrishnan 1992).

By concentrating on these goals, education in ancient Bharat aimed to produce people who were not only knowledgeable but also morally pure, socially conscious, and able to significantly contribute to the well-being of society as a whole.

NEP 2020's Vision Integrating Ancient Bharatiya Pedagogical Practices

Modern educational systems can incorporate the most effective techniques from past centuries. Education in ancient Bharat was focused on the complete realization and emancipation of the self rather than just the acquisition of knowledge for practical purposes. The NEP emphasizes the highest human aspirations of knowledge, wisdom, and truth while attempting to include indigenous knowledge systems and ancient Bharatiya wisdom into the contemporary educational framework. Acknowledging the significance of these elements, the NEP seeks to develop a more comprehensive and culturally embedded educational framework that equips students for the challenges of the twenty-first century (Mukherjee 2015). The study of Sanskrit's linguistic, spiritual, and religious facets is necessary to preserve its peace, humanism, and fraternity. One of the key markers of a society's well-being, wealth, and security is its level of education. The process of education provides people with lifelong abilities that are useful. The creative capacity of Bharat has been substantially damaged by foreign invasion, which has resulted in the loss of traditional knowledge systems and the repression of local innovation (Kumar 1991). Western and Arabic/Persian influences were incorporated into Bharatiya art, literature, and architecture as a result of the legacy of colonialism, Islamic conquest, and the Mughal reign. The consequence of this was the absorption of cultures, the disruption of social and economic systems, and the loss of intellectual capital. The modern Bharatiya educational system

is primarily dominated by Western ideas, literature, culture, and STEM fields. Western education and learning methodologies are being used in Bharat to create graduates without adding any qualitative value that is appropriate. The children born into this system have lost their identity and are turning into fully American or British colonists. The greatest poet in history, Kalidasa, is mostly unknown to the majority of our children despite being an integral part of Bharatiya culture. It is advised that students learn ancient as well as modern philosophy and value systems to revive the Bharatiya tradition. The greatest texts, such as *The Life Divine*, *The Foundation of Bharatiya Culture*, and *Yoga Synthesis*, need to be included in our school curricula (Raina 2021). Hence, through ancient literature, texts, and history students in modern times learn about their rich culture and heritage.

Four Vedas: The Sources of the Philosophy in Ancient Bharat

The Vedas are the oldest and most sacred scriptures of Hinduism, serving as the foundation of spiritual, philosophical, and scientific thought in ancient Bharat. It is a source of Ancient Bharatiya history and provides direction and purpose for followers. The Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda are among the Vedas, which form the basis of Bharatiya culture (Sahoo 2024). Ancient Education in Bharat was founded on these four Vedas. People can acquire an in-depth knowledge of the overarching structure of ancient Bharatiya culture as well as the philosophy of life by studying these Vedas. As a result, the Upanishads, Smritis, Puranas, and all other Bharatiya literature and philosophy acknowledge the supremacy of the Vedas. Through them, we can understand the culture, civilization, life, and philosophy of the ancient Bharatiya people. The Vedas represent the primary objective of human existence. The Bharatiya philosophy of life has never accepted that life is purposeless.

- *Rigveda*: In Hinduism, the Rigveda is regarded as one of the four sacred Vedic texts. The Rigveda is the oldest and most important of the four Vedas, forming the foundation of Hindu philosophy, spirituality, and culture. The Rigveda shaped the spiritual, social, and intellectual landscape of ancient Bharat, influencing later Hindu scriptures like the Upanishads, Puranas, Mahabharata and Ramayana. Certain prayers from the Rigveda, including the well-known Gayatri mantra found in the Samaveda and Yajurveda, have preserved the human soul and reached the pinnacle of wisdom. Rigveda Samhita

is an anthology with more than ten thousand verses organized into ten mandalas, or books, and more than a thousand hymns, known as suktas. The praise and worship of the gods is the central theme of the hymns and lyrics, which also have various philosophical and thought-provoking contexts. The issues addressed in the hymns were those that dealt with the then socioeconomic challenges (Radhakrishnan and Moore 1957).

- *Samaveda*: The focus of the Samaveda is on the music of the hymns and traditions. It is comprised of approximately 1,875 verses, the majority of which are translated from the Rigveda, particularly from the eighth and ninth books of the Rigveda. It is divided into two primary pieces: the Purvarchika, which is the first part, and the Uttararchika, which is the second part. Within each of these sections, numerous sorts of chants are meant for particular rituals, most notably the Somayaga ('Samaveda' n.d.).
- *Yajurveda*: The Yajurveda comprises a series of written mantras. The Hotri (priest) is in charge of singing hymns during sacrifices, but Adhvaryus (the priest's assistants) lead the first class of Vedic priests in singing hymns that are directly associated with the dedication rituals. For this reason, a distinct training institution was founded to instruct these priests. While the Yajurveda contains basic kinds of prose composition, the Upanishads are the pinnacle of Bharatiya literature. In the Yajurveda, an understanding of both the religious and secular facets of Bharatiya culture can be obtained.
- *Atharvaveda*: The fourth Veda was subsequently referred to as the Atarvaveda. Hymns, spells, and incantations are all included in the Atharvaveda, which is a collection of texts that focuses on rituals, healing, and everyday living (Vashney and Suresh 2015). It differs from the other Vedas in that it contains philosophical discourses and covers practical issues of life.

Education in Ancient Bharat: Processes and Methods

The Gurukul system was a holistic and immersive educational approach that was used in ancient Bharat. In this system, students lived with their Guru (teacher) to acquire information in an atmosphere that was both rigorous and caring. Unlike modern institutional education, the Gurukul system emphasized experiential learning, ethical development, and practical application of knowledge. The subjects ranged from religion to phi-

losophy, medicine, literature, military, astrology, history, and mathematics. Students were encouraged to pursue wisdom throughout their lives by being active participants in their intellectual and spiritual development rather than just passive recipients of knowledge (Radhakrishnan 1953). The ancient Bharatiya education system was based on a three-step learning process. The first step, known as *Sravana* (Listening), required learners to pay close attention to the Guru's teachings, which were communicated verbally. This approach followed to the *Sruti* tradition, which did not involve the writing down of information but rather the vocal transmission of information, hence highlighting the significance of auditory learning and memory. Students were expected to comprehend the fundamental truths that were disclosed by the Guru, and listening was not a passive activity but rather an active involvement (Simjith and Vasudevan, 2017).

During the *Manana* (Reflection and Contemplation) period, students were required to analyse, contemplate, and internalise the knowledge that they had gained through *Sravana*. Critical thinking and reasoning were emphasised throughout this stage, and students were given the opportunity to construct their own interpretations and test their own understanding through discussion and debate. *Shastrartha* (philosophical debates) and group discussions were essential for assessing and improving students' conceptual understanding (Kumar 1991).

Nididhyasana (Application) focused on the practical application of the acquired knowledge. The students were encouraged to integrate what they were learning into their everyday lives, which ensured that they gained experiential wisdom rather than just theoretical understanding. This phase sought to promote intellectual, spiritual, and ethical growth by transforming intellectual knowledge into lived experience and achieving a profound alteration of the self (Simjith and Vasudevan, 2017).

The Vedic education system employed three primary teaching methodologies:

- *Oral Transmission* (*Shruti* and *Smriti* Tradition), where students memorized Vedic hymns and Rigvedic verses. This guaranteed the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next before the emergence of written texts. Mnemonic techniques, including recitation, repetition, and chanting, were implemented to improve retention (Altekar 2009).
- *The Gurukul method* emphasized reflective thinking (*Chintan* and

Manana Shakti), which went beyond the concept of memorisation. Students were able to build their autonomous thought processes through the use of this method, which acknowledged that reasoning and self-inquiry were essential components of the learning process. The principle of thought (Manana Shakti) was considered superior to the mere accumulation of information, making self-education and intellectual exploration essential components of learning (Kumar 1988).

- *Debate*, also known as Shastrathra, was an quintessential part of Vedic education. During this time, students engaged in intellectual discourse to challenge and increase their level of comprehension. This approach was helpful in developing a culture of critical inquiry, as well as in enhancing reasoning abilities and elucidating concepts. Students were allowed to engage in rigorous debates on philosophical issues, which assisted them in developing their ability to think independently and apply logical thinking while attempting to solve problems (Shireeshkumar, Gore, and Popatwar 2023).

The all-encompassing educational approach of ancient Bharat ensured that students developed not only intellectual acumen but also moral integrity and life skills. Ethical and spiritual disciplines were taught alongside astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and strategy to develop well-rounded people. The Gurukul system was a powerful form of education that went beyond academics to change the ethical and intellectual fabric of society (Altekar 2009). This was made possible by the focus placed on experiential learning, critical reflection, and ethical living.

Role of Yoga in Personality Development

Within the framework of traditional Bharatiya philosophy and the practice of Yoga, the Niyamas are inward constraints or observances that direct people toward self-improvement, self-control, and spiritual advancement. The Yamas, as they are known in the context of ancient Bharatiya philosophy and education, are self-disciplines or ethical disciplines that direct people's behaviour and social relationships. The Yamas are regarded as essential guidelines for moral behaviour and spiritual development. The practice of Yoga Sastra includes five Yamas that serve as guidelines for ethical behaviour and self-control (Agrawal and Pandey 2022). These are:

- *Ahimsa* (Non-violence): This concept places a strong emphasis on

acting with compassion and non-violence toward all living things. It means refraining from harming oneself or others, including physical or mental abuse. Ahimsa encourages compassion, understanding, and harmonious coexistence.

- *Satya* (Truthfulness): Satya is the dedication to speaking, thinking, and responding with truthfulness. It means refraining from dishonesty, deceit, and cheating. Satya practice promotes sincerity, morality, and genuineness in interpersonal interactions.
- *Asteya* (Non-stealing): Asteya places a strong emphasis on abstaining from coveting, stealing, or taking something that is not one's own. It entails being truthful in one's economic dealings, treating others with respect, and learning to be content with what one has.
- *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy or Continence): This has traditionally been considered as one of the Yamas in yoga practice. It entails exercising restraint, self-control, and directing one's energies toward spiritual endeavours. Brahmacharya promotes sensory experiences, relational discipline, and vital energy conservation.
- *Aparigraha* (Non-greed or Possessiveness): Aparigraha stresses contentment, simplicity, and non-attachment in daily life. It entails abstaining from excessive association with material belongings, collecting, and selfishness. Aparigraha encourages generosity, detachment, and an emphasis on inner richness as opposed to material possessions. People develop self-discipline, moral integrity, and ethical behaviour in their daily lives by adhering to the Yamas. The Yamas direct people toward a path of self-awareness, self-improvement, and the moral life by serving as principles for harmony, compassion, and spiritual development.

As part of the practice of Yoga Sastra, there are five Niyamas that centre on developing beneficial attributes and attitudes within oneself. The five Niyamas are:

- *Saucha* (Cleanliness and Purity): Saucha places a strong emphasis on the body, mind, and thoughts being virtuous and clean. It entails upholding mental clarity, emotional purity, and physical hygiene. Saucha promotes punctuality, neatness, and clarity for both one's external surroundings and internal state.
- *Santosha* (Contentment): Santosha denotes inner satisfaction and contentment with one's situation and experiences. It entails embracing and enjoying life as it comes, free from an obsessive need for

more material goods, money, or approval from others. Santosha cultivates calmness, thankfulness, and peace of mind.

- *Tapas* (Self-Control and Hard Work): Tapas is the discipline, austerity, and readiness to work hard for one's own development and spiritual advancement. It includes exercising restraint, tenacity, and devotion in one's undertakings. Tapas develops inner strength, persistence, and determination.
- *Svadhyaya* (Self-Study and Self-Reflection): Svadhyaya emphasizes self-study, introspection, and lifelong learning. It encompasses the study of sacred texts, scriptures, and philosophical teachings, as well as self-reflection on one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Svadhyaya fosters intellectual growth, self-awareness, and self-discovery.
- *Ishvarapranidhana* (Surrender to a Higher Power): This emphasizes giving in to a higher or divine power. It entails admitting and accepting the existence of a higher reality beyond individual control and cultivates humility, faith, and trust in a greater purpose or guiding force (Patal 2019).

The Niyamas are a set of rules for cultivating virtues, good traits, and attitudes that aid people on their path to inner peace and self-realization (Iyengar 1965). Through the Niyamas, people achieve inner purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-reflection, and submission to a higher force (Bhatta 2009). These qualities promote spiritual development and alignment with higher ideals. Teaching used to take into account the qualifications (leadership qualities) of students (*adhikaritva*), but in the modern educational system, this is difficult to do. The teachers of old possessed some innate qualities (*shtrotiriyam*, *brahmanistha*) that enabled them to impart knowledge of both the highest spiritual and worldly nature. Together, the Niyamas and Yamas (self-restraints) provide a comprehensive ethical and moral framework for those who want to reform themselves and live a holistic, well-rounded life (Bhavanani, Ramanathan, and Madanmohan 2013). The setting in which students and teachers interact has drastically changed, with a greater emphasis now being placed on student-centric strategies for helping students develop their greatest abilities. Vocational training was integral to the earlier education system, but reviving it poses challenges. To achieve the best outcomes, it is essential to blend traditional education's wisdom with the modern system's strengths. Since yoga emphasizes the cultivation of the body and mind, the present-day educational system admires it as one such technique that

can be utilized to bridge the gap between ancient and modern value systems (Ranade and Nikam 2023). The practical benefits of yoga are being recognized in various domains of life. Yoga is an emerging field that requires greater emphasis in modern curricula. As a cohesive and rigorous multifaceted discipline, it plays a vital role in fostering holistic personality development. It occupies a unique place in the modern world as a process of refinement of the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual arena of an individual. The present education system accentuates only some of the aspects of the personality of a student but is lacking in the holistic development of personality. Students are facing numerous issues and difficulties on a physical, emotional, and intellectual level as a result of this. The preventive, restorative, and nurturing principles of yoga can offer guidance for a holistic personality (Naragatti, Hosakote, and Anburani 2023).

Implementational Strategies

In contemporary Bharat, the curriculum in all disciplines is primarily shaped by current Western intellectual and cultural traditions. While knowledge from diverse intellectual traditions can be enlightening, no single framework offers the absolute or best way to understand nature and reality. The dominance of a monocultural approach in the Bharatiya education system has resulted in an excessive dependence on Eurocentric knowledge frameworks, epistemologies, and ontologies. The lasting impact of colonialism is apparent in Bharat's most prestigious academic institutions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to amalgamate traditional knowledge systems with contemporary educational practices, acknowledging the profundity of ancient Bharatiya wisdom. This method recognises Bharat's profound intellectual heritage while aiming to render education more culturally grounded, inclusive, and responsive to societal demands. NEP 2020 aims to establish an accessible, holistic, and successful learning framework by incorporating Indigenous educational traditions. This policy is based on the pursuit of knowledge (Jnan), truth (Satya), and wisdom (Pragya), which are historically considered the ultimate human endeavours in Bharatiya philosophy.

An essential implementation strategy of NEP 2020 is the integration of traditional knowledge systems into contemporary curricula. Education is conceived as a mechanism for cultivating moral consciousness and intellectual capacities, promoting a holistic perspective that transcends materialistic pursuits. The policy encourages a multidisciplinary, flexi-

ble approach, providing students with multiple entry and exit points following the completion of Class 10. This approach empowers students to make well-informed decisions, guaranteeing that education remains readily accessible, personalized to their needs, and appropriately related to what they desire. The National Curriculum Frameworks for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 and Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) 2022 emphasise an in-depth foundation of traditional education. Modern educational systems draw inspiration from the Gurukul system, which is renowned for fostering self-reliance, discipline, and moral principles. These frameworks seek to cultivate well-rounded persons endowed with a profound sense of responsibility and purpose by integrating contemporary instructional strategies with traditional wisdom. Other than that, NEP 2020 emphasises the importance of yoga, meditation, and ancient wellness practices rooted in texts such as the Gita and the Upanishads. These components support mental, emotional, and physical health, highlighting the importance of education in developing resilient and thoughtful individuals. NEP 2020 proposes a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready education system by blending traditional knowledge with modern techniques. This approach not only equips students with critical thinking and creativity but also ensures that learning remains deeply rooted in Bharatiya values and intellectual traditions.

Conclusion

The incorporation of ancient Bharatiya knowledge and traditions within the framework of the National Education Policy of 2020 (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development n.d.) has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the achievement of the policy's aims of providing an education that is both holistic and inclusive. Additionally, the emphasis placed on experiential learning through practices such as *Savana*, *Manana*, and *Nididhyasana* helps to cultivate critical thinking, self-reflection, and a profound comprehension of information, which is in line with the NEP 2020's emphasis on competency-based education. In addition, traditional educational models, such as the Gurukula model, emphasize individualized instruction and mentoring, both of which have the potential to contribute to increased student engagement and achievement. According to the findings of several studies, modern education can solve contemporary difficulties, such as mental well-being and emotional resilience, by combining these old traditions. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) unveils the capacity to propel a more balanced, inclusive, and transformative educational landscape that not only

prepares students for academic achievement but also for personal and social growth. This is accomplished by drawing on the rich heritage of Bharatiya knowledge and its pedagogical practices.

References

- Agrawal, Aditya, and Ashish Pandey. 'Examining Relevance of Yama and Niyama at Collective Level.' *Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion* 19 (5): 505–521. 2022
- Altekar, Ananat S. 2009. *Education in Ancient India*. Varanasi: Nand Kishore & Brothers.
- Badjatya, Kavitha. 2024. 'The Concept of Puru Rtha from the Present Perspective.' *Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 6 (8): 103–104.
- Basham, Arthur L. 1954. *The Wonder that Was India: A Survey of the History and Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson.
- Bhatta, Panduranga C. 2009. 'Holistic Personality Development through Education.' *Journal of Human Values* 15 (1): 49–59.
- Bhavanani, Amanda B., Meena Ramanathan, and Madanmohan. 2013. 'Immediate Cardiovascular Effects of a Single Yoga Session in Different Conditions.' *Alternative & Integrative Medicine* 2 (9): 144.
- Biswas, Adarini K. 2016. 'Development of Education in India during the Medieval Period: A Historical Approach.' *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 3 (2): 260–266.
- Chattopadhyay, Madhumita. 2023. 'Ancient Indian Education System: An Analysis.' *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts* 11 (3): 950–952.
- Chidbhavananda, Swami. 1964. *The Indian National Education*. Tirupparaithurai, Tamil Nadu: Tapovanam.
- Gaur, Shailja. 2024. 'Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into Modern Education: An Analysis of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.' *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 10 (6): 519–521.
- Ghonge, Mangesh M., Rohit Bag, and Aniket Singh. 2020. 'Indian Education: Ancient, Medieval and Modern.' In *Education at the Intersection of Globalization and Technology*, edited by Sharon Waller, Lee Waller, Mongai Mpofu, and Mercy Kurebwa. IntechOpen.
- Ghosh, Niladri S. 2016. 'Ideology of Education in Ancient and Present Society of India – A Study Report.' *Business and Economics Journal* 7:234.
- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. N.d. 'National Education Policy 2020.' https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_o.pdf.
- Iyengar, Bellur K. S. 1965. *Light on Yoga: Yoga Dīpikā*. New York: Schocken.
- Kumar, Krishna. 1988. 'Origins of India's "textbook culture."' *Comparative Education Review* 32 (4): 452–464.
- . 1991. *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Kumari, Pammi. 2017. 'Education System in Vedic Period.' *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Immovative Research* 4 (9): 620–623.
- Markandan, N. 2001. 'The Value and Purpose of Education.' In *Contribu-*

- tions Towards An Agenda For India*, edited by Samir Banerjee and Sanjeev Ghotge, 91–93. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.
- Mookerjee, Radha K. 1989. *Ancient Bharatiya Education*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Mukherjee, Mousumi. 2015. 'Indian Education at the Crossroads of Postcoloniality, Globalization and the 21st Century Knowledge Economy (Part 1).' *Policy Futures in Education* 13 (2): 165–170.
- Naragatti, Siddappa, Vadiraja S. Hosakote, and S. Anburani. 2023. 'The Role of Yoga in Enhancing Student Well-Being and Academic Performance: A Comprehensive Review.' *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research* 10 (10): b738–b748.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2022. *National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage*. New Delhi: NCERT.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2023. *National Curriculum Framework for School Education*. New Delhi: NCERT.
- Olivelle, Patrick. 1996. *The Early Upanishads: Annotated Text & Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pal, Goutam, and Nikhilesh Chakrabarti. 2024. 'An Analytical Evaluation of the Guru-Shishya Relationships as Put Together in the Vedic Era.' *International Journal Of Progressive Research in Engineering Management and Science* 4 (8): 149–151.
- Panchal, Nidhi. 2023. 'Purushartha in Modern Age.' *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* 11 (3): 1278–1281.
- Patal, Nimisha K. 2019. 'Importance of Yoga & Meditation in Education.' *International Journal of Research in all Subjects in Multi Languages* 7 (1): 72–74.
- Radhakrishnan, Servepalli. 1953. *The Principal Upanishads*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- . 1992. *The Principal Upanishads*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities.
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, and Charles A. Moore. 1957. *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Raina, Dhruv. 2021. 'The Future of Higher Education: Through the Lens.' *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration* 35 (2): 97–107.
- Rajagopalan, Aparna. 2021. 'Holistic Student-Centered Education in the Vedic Gurukula System.' *International Journal of Applied Research* 7 (5): 156–159.
- Ranade, Rashmi P., and Jaydeep D. Nikam, 2023. 'Place of Yoga in National Education Policy 2020.' *EPRA International Journal of Research and Development* 8 (6): 190–193.
- Rangachar, S. 1964. *Early Indian Thought*. Mysore: Geetha.
- Sahoo, Jayanti P. 2024. 'Ancient Indian Knowledge System and Its Application in Higher Education.' *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts* 12 (1): Q693–Q703.
- 'Samaveda.' N.d. Vedic Heritage Portal. <https://vedicheritage.gov.in/samhitas/samaveda-samhitas/>.
- Selvamani, P. 2019. 'Gurukul System – An Ancient Educational System of Bharat.' *International Journal of Applied Social Science* 6 (6): 1620–1622.

- Shareen, Santosh K., and Makarand Paranjape, eds. 2004. *Shabda: Text and Interpretation in Indian Thought*. New Delhi: Mantra.
- Shireeshkumar, Rudrawar, Shyam K. Gore, and Niwraati G. Popatwar. 2023. 'Education System in Ancient India: Introduction.' In *National Education Policy 2020: A Review*, edited by Shyam Khobraji Gore, 35–44. Jintur: Dnyanopasak Shikshan Mandals Arts, Commerce and Science College.
- Simjith, V., and T. M. Vasudevan. 2017. 'Bibliotheca: The Road to Wisdom.' *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1619.
- Singh, Sahana. 2017. *The Educational Heritage of Ancient India: How an Ecosystem of Learning Was Laid to Waste*. Chennai: Notion.
- Sreekala Devi, S., and K. N. M. Pillai. 2012. 'Genesis and Evolution of Education in Ancient India.' *Pragati Quarterly Research Journal*, 14–34.
- Rao, N. Venkatesha. 2020. 'Teacher and Student Relationship in Taittiriyaopanishad.' *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research* 9 (5): 9–18.
- Suman, Neena, and H. S. Ashok. 2015. 'Relevance of Purusharthas in Understanding Values and Motivations of Professionals.' *Purushartha: A Journal of Management Ethics and Spirituality* 3 (1): 81–90.
- Timane, Rajesh, and Priyanka Wandhe. 2024. 'Indian Knowledge System.' *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research* 11 (2): e512–e528.
- Vashney, Pallavi, and Swastik Suresh. 2015. 'A Critical Review of Emergence of the Ayurvedic Tradition in Vedic Literature.' *International Journal of Sanskrit Research* 1 (7): 24–27.